DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 254 909 EA 017 569

AUTHOR DeFord, Diane E.
TITLE Issues in Collaborative and Deliberative Processes.
PUB DATE 84
NOTE 11p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (New Orleans, LA, April 23-27, 1984).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Viewpoints (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Communicative Competence (Languages); Cooperation; *Cultural Context; Curriculum Development; Elementary Secondary Education; *Language Processing; *Social Behavior; Social Dialects; *Teacher Student Relationship

ABSTRACT

As an introducation to a symposium on curricular innovation, a sociolinguistic perspective is used to tie together presentations to follow on collaborative and deliberative processes in pedagogy, research, and evaluation in school settings. Collaboration and deliberation, as processes, are bound by the same constraints and potentials inherent in any communicative exchange, and factors that may exert independent influence on any collaborative venture are setting, participants, roles, and topic. Setting refers to the locale rather than the action and influences what is said and how it is stated. Participants may also bring clearly defined expectations of their status or role within a given interaction. Status refers to ascribed or achieved attributes that consistently influence how an individual speaks, or is spoken to. The notion of perceived role or status may also be influenced by cultural differences. For example, it has been shown that dialect differences seem to affect teachers' expectations and, therfore, their evaluation of students. Finally, topic refers to what the speech is about and can carry "social information" about the feelings of the speaker, sense of importance, and a sense of the relationship in which the speaker is involved. A 13-item bibliography is included. (MLF)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED254909

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Diane E. DeFord

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Issues in Collaborative and Deliberative Processes

Diane E. DeFord
The Ohio State University

Paper presented at the annual meeting of American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, La., 1984

EA 017 569

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Issues in Collaborative and Deliberative Processes

My task for today is to 'set the stage,' describe 'the props,' and introduce the positions of the 'cast' within the setting surrounding our topic of curricular innovation. In order to do this, I would like to take a language, or sociolinguistic perspective to tie together the three presentations to follow on collaborative and deliberative processes in pedagogy, research and evaluation in school settings. My rationale for doing so is that language, both verbal and nonverbal, is central to the use of collaboration and deliberation in society. By understanding how language works in learning and living, we can facilitate communication about curricular innovations and change.

We all have been in situations, informal or formal, where within the flow of conversation we might be lead to say "I thought we were on the same wave-length, but we are obviously not," or "I understand your position, and fully agree with you". The frustrations and joys of communicative interactions affect our day-to-day behavior. The daily exchanges we have are built upon our use of language, our intent to mean, the way we choose our words, our delivery, our understanding of previous and subsequent cues, and the varying contexts in which we move. Some of these factors are within the domain of conscious decision making, but much of what we say and do happens on an intuitive level. The ties that bind our actions and interpretations within conversational contexts are our cultural background and the common social roles and rules through which we operate.

McDermott (1977) suggests that answers to questions of what works

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

in classrooms must come from an understanding of the way relations between teachers and children affect the development of learning environments. He believes that teaching styles depend on cultural contexts for classroom interaction which may promote or retard learning: the process of teachers and students "making sense' of each other, holding each other accountable given the resources and limits of their community. Given that classrooms exist within the greater structures of school and society, the social relations that exist among teachers, students, parents, school and society all pertain, as all must be considered participants in decision making.

Green and Smith (1983) characterize teaching and learning as a linguistic process. This linguistic perspective provides information about how language functions in interactions between and among people in various settings to support learning. They describe classrooms as communicative environments, specific contexts in which language is constructed, interpreted and used as teachers and students work together to meet instructional goals. Within this classroom community, as in the greater speech community, teachers and children utilize their individual communicative competence to know when to speak and when to be silent, which form of speech or code to use, when, where or to whom (Hymes, 1967). This communicative competence serves as an individual frame of reference or a set of expectations based upon past experiences about how and when people talk, what constitutes an appropriate topic, and what constitutes appropriate participaton (Green & Smith, 1983). This would suggest that participants within classroom settings interact in patterned ways that are learned by interacting with others and are often culture specific. These patterned or rule-governed ways of interacting are very active;

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

they are "signaled" and may be negotiated in a given situation.

It is this unique aspect of language that is important to the issue of innovation and change in education. Given a specific context, language is used to signal meanings and intentions which are interpreted in light of the context and the participants' understanding of shared social conventions (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975). Through negotiation of these meanings, contextual features, conventions and interpretations, communicative intent is carried out. Collaboration and deliberation as processes are bound by the same constraints and potentials that are inherent to any communicative exchange, and thereby, as agents of change, are subject to success or failure based upon the interactions of the participants in the setting within topic and experiential limitations. A closer examination of factors within the setting, participants, roles or topic will indicate that they may exert independent influence on any collaborative venture.

Setting

The setting refers to the locale rather than the action--to the stage, the set, the props, and the number and position of the 'cast' (Edwards, 1976). Setting is difficult to separate from social situation, in this way specifiying restrictions and/or actions on participants and activities. This can best be illustrated through a language story called Holy Squirrel told by Jerry Harste (1981). He recounts the story of a young child listening to a "children's sermon" in church one Sunday morning.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

> Children, I'm thinking of something that is about five or six inches high; that scampers across the ground; that can climb trees; that lives in either a nest in a tree or makes it's home in a hollowed-out portion of the tree's trunk. The thing I'm thinking about gathers nuts and stores them for winter; it is sometimes brown and sometimes gray; it has a big bushy tail. Who can tell me what I'm thinking of?

His question met with a very long silence. One child raised his hand, and responded, "Well, ordinarily, I'd think it was a squirrel, but I suppose you want me to say it was Jesus." In this instance, everything the minister had said logically pointed to his meaning squirrel, but because of the influence of setting on the child's attempts to understand, his response was based upon contextual appropriateness rather than logic. In the same way, conversations that take place in the privacy of your own home have different content and form than do those in a job interview in a formal office setting, or a conference in a school. Setting influences what is said and how it is stated.

Participants: Status and Role

Participants may also bring clearly defined expectations of their status or role within a given interaction. Status refers to social identity, not 'institutionalized role'. It refers to attributes, ascribed or achieved, which consistently influence how an individual speaks, or is spoken to, because of what he is. 'How he speaks' in this context means what selection is made for ways of speaking (Edwards, 1976). Edwards points out that in highly status-marked situations, the 'right' form of address may be precisely defined (e.g. Mr. President, Father, Sir, Madam), and personal feelings tend to be

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

'properly' masked. Who speaks first and who closes the exchange are influenced by perceptions of status and role. What matters is the relative status of the participants, the facts of rank and familiarity that they must recognize in speech. Who they are may be so pervasively significant as to influence all the relationships in which they are involved. The roles may so dominate the interaction as to make other factors irrelevant, or they may sometimes be cast aside in favor of a more personalized relationship which relaxes the constraints. Modes of address, then, like other aspects of linguistic choice, reflect and affirm how members perceive their relationship, and especially the social distance between them.

In the following transcription of a conversation between a husband and a wife (Gumperz, 1976), each of the participants perceived role relationships frame the interaction.

Transcription	Description
H. Do you know where today's paper is?	H, using question form, asks for location of newspaper.
W. I'll get it for you.	W does not reply to question, but offers to get the paper. I'll is marked by stress and slightly raised pitch. Suggesting annoyance?
H. That's O.K. Just tell me where it is. I'll get it.	H retorts he is asking for information, not making a request. Stress on I'll .
W. No I'll get it.	W reiterates offer, with I'll now marked by very emphatic stress, suggesting increasing annoyance.

This example illustrates how communication, or miscommunication, is based not only in the linguistic cues, but in paralinguistic factors such as the role relationships of the participants. The pattern of

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

voice, pitch and stress features in this conversational segment suggest that the wife was interpreting the question as a request, or a demand for action on her part rather than a request for information. This interpretation may have been a result of other conversational interactions or role enactments within their relationship.

This notion of perceived role or status may also be influenced by cultural differences. Within varying cultures, there are different assumptions made about spatial relations and conversational posture, different interpretations of gestures and voice qualities, non-verbal signals such as gaze direction, or semantic content of messages (Gumperz, 1976; Erickson, 1976). These factors influence interpretations and attitudes which shape participants' evaluation of cross cultural interactions (Michaels & Cook-Gumperz, 1979; Cook-Gumperz, Gumperz & Simons, 1981). In classroom settings, it has been shown that dialect differences seem to affect teachers expectations and therefore their evaluation of student achievement (Rist, 1970; Piestrup, 1973). As the next example of teacher/student conversation will suggest, if neither the student nor the teacher are aware of the similarites or differences of meanings that may be signed through different dialects, faulty evaluations may occur (Gumperz, 1976).

Student: (reading from an autobiographical essay)
This lady, didn't have no sense.

Teacher: Do you know another way of saying that?

Student: Sure, 'She didn't have any sense. <u>But not this lady; she didn't hav, no sense.</u>

The teacher, intent on teaching grammar, interpreted the student's use of the dialect form as a grammatical mistake. Only through the

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

repetition of the phrase did the student convey that the switch into Black English was in itself meaningful; the lady had little feeling and concern for what is proper among Blacks (Gumperz, 1976).

Topic

Topic references what the speech is about (Edwards, 1976). Blom and Gumperz (1972) noted that some college students returning to a Norwegian town for a vacation reverted to their local dialect except at times when 'intellectual' topics in informal conversation brought frequent and sudden changes to the Standard dialect. The switch in topic carried with it a switch in form of language. Edwards states that what speech is 'about' can carry 'social information' about the feelings of the speaker, sense of importance, and a sense of the relationship in which the speaker is involved. It may be the means of getting people to do things or establish social inferiority of other participants.

Conclusion

In terms of the three other presentations within this symposium, each of the speakers will describe particular collaborative or deliberative events which were bound by different interactive frames. The relationships that exist among settings, participants and topics within their use of collaboration or deliberation in developing pedagogy, research and evaluation set the parameters, and therefore, the results of the interaction.

They will deal with several issues of import to collaborations:

1) What frame of reference do the participants bring to the setting?
2) Who collaborates, and to what purpose?
3) How do continuity, structure, time, and compensation influence

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

outcomes?
4) How is language used to facilitate or constrain interactions?
5) Who holds the power, and what roles evolve within the event?
6) How are shared and divergent assumptions negotiated?

Through the exploration of these issues, we hope to raise questions, and provide possible solutions in the creation of change and innovation within educational settings.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Bibliography

Blom, J. & Gumperz, J.J. Social meaning in linguistic structures. In J.J. Gumperz & D. Hymes (Eds.), Directions in Sociolinguistics . New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1972.

Cook-Gumperz, J., Gumperz, J.J., & Simons, H.D. (Eds.) School-home ethnography project (Final report NIE G-78-0082). Washington, D. C.: National Institute of Education, 1981.

Edwards, A.D. Language in culture and class . London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1976.

Erickson, F. GateKeeping encounters: A social selection process. In P. R. Sanday (Ed.), Anthropology and the public interest . New York: Academic Press, 1976.

Green, J.L., & Smith, D. Teaching and learning: A linguistic perspective. The Elementary School Journal , Vol 83, No. 4, pp. 353-391, 1983.

Gumperz, J. J. Language, communication and public negotiation. In P. R. Sanday (Ed.), Anthropology and the public interest . New York: Academic Press, 1976.

Harste, J. Making connections. Language Arts , Vol. 58, No. 6, pp. 628-630, 1981.

Hymes, D. Models of the interaction of language and social setting. Journal of Social Issues , Vol. 23. No. 2, pp. 8-28, 1967.

McDermott, R.P. Social relations as contexts for learning in school. Harvard Educational Review , Vol. 47, No. 2, pp. 198-213, May 1977.

Michaels, S., & Cook-Gumperz, J. A study of sharing time in first grade students: discourse narratives in the classroom. In Proceedings of the Berkeley Linguistic Society. Vol. 5. Berkeley, Ca.: Berkeley Linguistic Society, 1979.

Piestrap, A.M. Black dialect interference and accomodation of reading instruction in first grade. Monograph IV. Language Behavior Research Laboratory, University of California, Berkeley, 1973.

Rist, R.C. Student social class and teacher expectations. Harvard Educational Review, Vol. 39, pp. 411-415, 1970.

Sinclair, J., & Coulthard, R.M. Towards and analysis of discourse . London: Oxford University Press, 1975.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

END

DEPT. OF EDUCATION

NAT'L INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

ERIC

DATE FILMED

JULY

26 - 1985